

T H A M E S V A L L E Y

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S

**28 Spital Street, Dartford,
Kent**

Archaeological Evaluation

by Daniel Bray and Joanna Pine

Site Code: SPS14/127

(TQ 5405 7406)

**28 Spital Street, Dartford,
Kent**

**An Archaeological Evaluation
for Virginia Homes**

by Daniel Bray and Jo Pine

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code SPS 14/127

September 2014

Summary

Site name: 28 Spital Street, Dartford, Kent

Grid reference: TQ 5405 7406

Site activity: Archaeological Evaluation

Date and duration of project: 4th – 5th August 2014

Project manager: Steve Ford

Site supervisor: Daniel Bray

Site code: SPS 14/127

Area of site: 160 sq m

Summary of results: The evaluation has revealed that a complex sequence of post-medieval and medieval deposits. A linear feature is dated to the medieval period and a pit and backfilled well are of post-medieval date. There is a hint of Roman activity in form of deposits in the base of trench 1 and the recovery of a small assemblage of Roman residual pottery found in later deposits within this trench.

Location and reference of archive: The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at a suitable museum in due course.

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www.tvas.co.uk/reports/reports.asp.*

Report edited/checked by: Steve Ford✓ 19.09.14 Steve Preston✓ 18.09.14

28 Spital Street, Dartford, Kent An Archaeological Evaluation

by Daniel Bray and Jo Pine

Report 14/127

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out at 28 Spital Street, Dartford, Kent (TQ 54045 74055) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Rick Bakhshi of Virginia Homes Ltd, 243 Lewisham Way, Brockley, London, SE4 1XF.

Planning permission (DA/09/01339/FUL) has been gained from Dartford Borough Council for the demolition of the existing structures on the site and erection of a 4-storey part retail and part residential unit. The consent is subject to a condition relating to archaeology.

This is in accordance with the Department for Communities and Local Government's *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF 2012), and the Borough Council's policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Ms Wendy Rogers, Senior Archaeological Officer at Kent Heritage Service. The fieldwork was undertaken by Daniel Bray and Genni Elliott between the 4th and 5th August 2014 with the site code SPS 14/127. The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at a suitable museum in due course.

Location, topography and geology

The site is located within the centre of Dartford which now lies on the border of Kent and Greater London (Fig 1). The narrow parcel of land (c. 160 sq m) is located at 28 Spital Street (Fig 2). The site was previously occupied by a building which had been demolished. The River Darent, a tributary of the River Thames is 375m to the east of the site. The site lies at the boundary of alluvium deposits and undivided flood plain gravels (BGS 1977) and lies at a height of 6.4m above Ordnance datum.

Archaeological background

The archaeological potential of the site has been highlighted in a brief for the project provided by Ms Wendy Rogers of Kent Heritage Service (KCC 2014) and for the area more broadly in the Historic Towns Assessment (KCC 2004). In summary the site lies within the historic core of Dartford, to the west of the River Darent with numerous findspots in the general area, but with modern archaeological investigations having been generally on

a very small scale. Dartford is considered to have developed from a Roman settlement into a medieval market town. There is some limited evidence of prehistoric activity in the surrounding area, including the discovery of Iron Age pottery, and the underlying river gravels have the potential for containing prehistoric and palaeoenvironmental remains.

Spital Street is thought to follow the line of the Roman road, Watling Street, and the settlement presumably developed close to where this route crossed the River Darent. Unsurprisingly, numerous archaeological features dating from the Roman period have been found in the surrounding area, including rubbish pits, burials, ditches and building foundations. A limited amount of Roman activity has been recorded on the adjacent properties (22 to 26 Spital Street) to the east, during an evaluation and a follow-up excavation Parfitt and Corke 2008; TVAS in prep). This took the form of pits and a small number layers/deposits with Roman pottery found in quantities as residual material in the medieval and post-medieval layers. Although the fate of the settlement at Dartford is unclear following the end of the Roman period, Saxon cemeteries are known in the area, and it certainly seems to have been flourishing at the time of the Norman Conquest. It is mentioned in Domesday Book (1086) as *Tarentefort* (Mills 1993), at which time it was held by King William (Williams and Martin 1992).

A number of archaeological features dating from the medieval and early post-medieval periods have been recorded within Dartford generally, and close to Spital Street itself. The recent fieldwork on the adjacent property to the east (22 to 26 Spital Street) revealed medieval deposits and features such as ovens, hearths and building remains dated between the 12th century to 16th century. Structural remains from the early post-medieval period were also recorded with some evidence of post-medieval commerce/industry (TVAS in prep). The evaluation also recorded features from the later post-medieval and modern periods, but these had not significantly truncated the earlier remains on the site (Parfitt and Corke 2008).

Objectives and methodology

The purpose of the evaluation was to determine the presence/absence, extent, condition, character, quality and date of any archaeological deposits within the area of development. The specific aims of the project are:

- to determine if archaeologically relevant levels have survived on site;
- to determine if archaeological deposits of any period survive on site;
- to determine if any Roman deposits are present; and
- to determine if there is any medieval or early post medieval occupation present.

It was proposed to excavate 2 trenches, 5m long and 1.60m wide. The trenches were to be excavated using a small 360° type machine equipped with a toothless ditching bucket and supervised at all times by an archaeologist, with spoil removed being monitored for finds. All potential archaeological deposits were to be

hand-cleaned and sufficient of the archaeological features and deposits exposed were to be excavated or sampled by hand to satisfy the aims of the project.

Results

Both trenches were dug as intended (Fig. 3). Both trenches were 1.60m wide. Trench 1 was excavated to the top of the archaeological horizon. Due to the very narrow confines of the site, the unstable backfill of a Victorian basement and the proximity to an existing building to the west, Trench 2 could not be stepped and made safe so was only excavated to a depth containing post medieval deposits. A complete list of trenches giving lengths, breadths, depths and a description of sections and geology is given in Appendix 1.

Trench 1 (Figs 4 and 5)

Trench 1 was aligned NNE - SSW and was 4.30m long and 1.74m deep with a test pit excavated to 2.21m below the present land surface. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.40m of modern overburden and rubble above 0.34m of very dark greyish brown sandy clay which contained modern material including coal. This deposit sealed a layer of dark brown sandy clay with chalk flecks (50) which was 0.50m deep and from which a clay pipe stem of early mid 18th century date was recovered. This overlay a layer of orange brown sandy clay and gravel (51) which was 0.10m deep which contained a residual sherd of Roman pottery.

Below this was a layer of chalk (52) which was 0.10m deep and which could possibly be a floor surface; no features were seen cutting the deposit. This chalk layer overlay a greyish brown silty clay deposit (53) which was 0.20m deep and contained residual Roman pottery sherds and a sherd of early 13th-14th century pottery together with ceramic building material, animal bone and oyster shell.

A sondage measuring 1.35m by 1.00m was excavated through layer 53 at the southern end of the trench. Below this was a layer (54) which was a greyish brown silty clay; 0.22m deep; and contained residual Roman pottery together with three sherds of medieval pottery with a date range of mid 11th-early 13th century, animal bone and three fragments of iron metalwork, oyster shell, a glazed floor tile.

This sealed a possible linear feature (1) which was on a NNE-SSW alignment and was revealed for 1.50m diagonally across the full sondage, and was 0.40m wide and excavated to a depth of 0.35m. This feature contained fill (56) which contained a sherd of Kingston ware of early 13th-14th century date. This feature appeared to cut deposit 55; a green grey silty clay which contained large gravel inclusions and a sherd of Roman pottery. This in turn sealed a deposit (57) which was a green grey silty clay.

Trench 2 (Figs 4 and 5)

Trench 2 was aligned NNE - SSW and was 6.20m long and 1.92m deep. Excavation and removal of concrete/modern overburden and 0.70m of a dark grey brown silty clay of made ground (65) revealed the foundations of a former building and at the northern end of the trench; on its eastern side connected to an east-west foundation; was a backfilled basement/cellar (Fig. 5). These remains relate to the property on the street frontage which can be seen on the Ordnance Survey map of 1869. At the far southern end of the trench was a modern disturbance and a ceramic pipe which was seen to a depth of 1.30m below the present ground surface.

On removal of layer 65, a chalk layer (58) was observed which had been truncated at the northern end of the trench by a large pit (3) which was over 1.00m by 3.00m and over 0.50m deep. This feature contained a dark brown silty clay (64) which contained ceramic building materials and clay pipe stems of 18th-19th century date (neither retained).

The chalk layer (58) was 0.20m deep and could again be considered as a floor surface. This was removed to reveal a dark brown silty clay with chalk inclusions (59) which was between 0.22 and 0.60m deep; deepening from north to south and which contained an 18th century pottery sherd.

A test pit 0.52m deep was excavated through this deposit at the southern end of the trench; this revealed that below 59, butting from the eastern section was a cut (2). This was over 1.00m by 0.40m and a tentative suggestion is that this is a backfilled well. It contained deposits 62 and 63. This was observed truncating a deposit (61) which was a dark brown silty clay with chalk inclusions.

Below deposit 59 in the remainder of the trench was a layer of chalk (60) whose full thickness was not revealed but was over 0.40m deep. Due to trench collapse and safety reasons the excavation ceased at this level.

Finds

Pottery by Paul Blinkhorn

The pottery assemblage comprised 45 sherds with a total weight of 611g. It comprised a mixture of Roman, medieval and post-medieval wares. It was recorded using the codes and chronologies of the Canterbury Archaeological Trust Fabric series for the county of Kent. The following fabric types were noted.

Roman

R17: Oxidized Upchurch Ware, 2 sherds, 34g.

R33: Colchester colour-coated ware, 1 sherd, 4g.

R43: Central Gaulish Samian ware, 1 sherd, 1g.

R68: Patch Grove Ware, 5 sherds, 125g.

R71: Pink-Buff Ware, 1 sherd, 6g.

R73: Misc Grey sandy wares, 29 sherds, 247g

Medieval and Later

EM35: N/W Kent Shelly Ware, mid 11th – early 13th century. 3 sherds, 37g.

M7: Kingston Ware, early 13th – 14th century. 2 sherds, 149g.

PM26: Staffs-type white stoneware, 1725-1780. 1 sherd, 8g.

The pottery occurrence by number and weight of sherds per context by fabric type is shown in Appendix 3. The Roman pottery comprised, in the main, fairly small sherds which were abraded to some degree, indicating that most, if not all, the assemblage is residual. The medieval and later material is in much better condition, and appears to have been the subject of little disturbance, indicating that is likely to be reliably stratified. The sherd of Kingston Ware from context 56 is a complete strap handle from a jug.

Animal Bone by Ceri Falys

A small assemblage of animal bone was recovered from two consecutive layers located within trench 1. A total of 15 fragments of bone were present for analysis, weighing 248g (Appendix 4). The overall surface preservation of the remains was fair, with few areas of etching and erosion of the cortical bone noted, and a moderate amount of fragmentation present.

A minimum of three animals were represented in this small assemblage: one cow in layer 55, one sheep/goat and one small (possible cat) from layer 54. A small portion of sheep/goat sized mandible with two *in situ* worn molars was present, with thick calculus deposition on the superior halves of the buccal surfaces. A small humerus shaft was also present. Although both articular ends were absent, the overall size and shape of this element suggested a possible feline origin. The evidence of cow was a small portion of unsided distal radius.

Evidence of butchery practices were identified on skeletal elements from layer 54. Three parallel cut marks (max. length = 7.6mm) were present on the lingual surface of the sheep/goat sized mandibular shaft, running diagonally (approximately 45 degrees medial to lateral) across the surface. A non-descript medium sized animal long bone shaft fragment also displayed a single cut mark, which ran transversally across the bone's surface (maximum length = 9.9mm). No further information could be retrieved from this small assemblage of bone.

Ceramic Building Materials by Danielle Milbank

A total of 715g of ceramic building material (7 fragments) were recovered during the evaluation. Of this, the majority of identifiable fragments were tile, with two brick fragments present. The ceramic building material was examined under x10 magnification and is summarized in Appendix 5.

Context 53 contained a single large piece of curved pan tile of late medieval or post-medieval date, 16mm thick and of a hard, evenly fired fine fabric with sandy inclusions, and a red colour.

Context 54 contained a piece of tile which is 26mm thick and is of a slightly soft fabric with fine sandy inclusions. The colour is grey red with a slightly darker (reduced) core and the form is uneven, indicating it is handmade and of likely medieval or early post-medieval date, and may represent floor rather than roofing tile. Further pieces of tile from this context are of a similar but harder fabric, and are 16mm to 18mm thick. All the fragments examined have a rough underside, indicating that they were made using a sanded mould. Based on form and fabric, these are likely to represent roofing tile of post-medieval date. A small brick fragment was slightly soft, evenly fired, with small well-sorted sand inclusions. The colour is a dark red and the form slightly irregular. Although it is not closely datable, the form and fabric suggest a late medieval or early post-medieval date.

Clay Pipe by Susan Porter

A single fragment of clay pipe 50mm in length, 9mm wide with a bore hole of 3mm was recovered from layer 50. It is an un-diagnostic piece and cannot be securely dated but the size of the bore suggests a date from the early – mid 18th century. A small number of pipe stems were noted from pit 3 but not retained.

Oyster Shell by Susan Porter

A total of 12 oyster shell fragments weighing 39.5g was recovered from medieval layer 54, 5 came from the excavation and 7 fragments were recovered from environmental sampling of the layer. Two shells are nearly complete, the rest are fragmentary suggesting deposition as refuse.

Metalwork by Steven Crabb

Three pieces of ferrous metalwork were recovered from deposit 54. One was a nail with square head and shaft 50mm long. The central portion of a square cross section staple measures 50mm long and both ends have been damaged. A small forked object was also recovered from this context, it measures 30mm long and consists of a square shaft which is flattened and bifurcated to leave a forked end, both ends of this piece have been broken. It is possible that this forked end is the remains of an eye which would have been used for suspension, or it may be the start of a pronged implement. This small assemblage suggests that wooden structures or objects such as furniture were present on this site.

Charred plant remains by Joanna Pine

A soil sample of 20L was taken from layer (54). It was wet sieved using a 0.2mm mesh. The sample produced a small amount of charcoal, some of which was over 2mm and thus has potential for species identification. A single cereal grain was also present in the sample.

Conclusion

The evaluation has revealed that a complex sequence of post-medieval and medieval deposits survive on the site and that there is a surviving stratigraphy of deposits which is over 2m deep. There is also a hint of Roman activity on the site in form of a small assemblage of Roman residual pottery found in later deposits and just possibly contemporary deposits in the base of Trench 1. There is a degree of truncation by later post-medieval and modern structures however this has not significantly truncated the earlier remains on the site. Indeed it appears that the evaluation has highlighted that the site has the potential to contain a similar range and date of archaeological deposits to that found on the adjacent site (22 to 26 Spital Street) to the east, and may have the potential to address several questions highlighted in the Kent Historic Towns' Survey (KCC 2004, 27–8).

References

- BGS, 1977, *British Geological Survey*, 1:50000, Sheet 271, Drift Edition, Keyworth
- KCC, 2004, 'Kent Historic Towns' Survey Dartford - Kent Archaeological Assessment Document', Maidstone
- KCC, 2014, Specification for an archaeological evaluation (trial trenching) at 28 Spital Street, Dartford, Kent, Kent County Council Heritage Conservation, Maidstone
- Mills, A D, 1993, *English Place-names*, Oxford
- NPPF 2012, *National Planning Policy Framework*, Dept Communities and Local Government, London
- Parfitt, K, and Corke, B, 2008, 'Report on evaluation trenching at 22-26 Spital Street, Dartford', Canterbury Archaeological Trust report SPSD-EV-08
- TVAS in prep, 'Excavations at 22-26 Spital St, Dartford, Kent', Thames Valley Archaeological Services project 13/201, Reading
- Williams, A, and Martin, G H, 1992, *Domesday Book – a complete translation*, London

APPENDIX 1: Trench details

0m at S end

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Length (m)</i>	<i>Breadth (m)</i>	<i>Depth (m)</i>	<i>Comment</i>
1	4.30	1.60	2.21	0-0.40m modern overburden and rubble; 0.40-0.74m modern/victorian dark greyish brown sandy clay; 0.74-1.24m dark brown sandy clay with chalk flecks (50); 1.24-1.34m orange brown sandy clay and gravel (51); 1.34-1.44m layer of chalk (52); 1.44-1.66m greyish brown silty clay deposit (53); 1.66-1.86 greyish brown silty clay layer (54); 1.86-2.21m green grey in colour and silty clay (55); 2.21m+ green grey silty clay (57). Feature 1. Pis 1 and 2]
2	6.20	1.60	1.92	0-0.20m concrete; 0.20-0.40m modern overburden; 0.40-1.10m dark grey brown silty clay made ground (65) onto foundations of a former building and at the northern end of the trench; on its eastern side connected to an east-west foundation; was a backfilled basement/cellar. At the far southern end of the trench was modern disturbance and a ceramic pipe to a depth of 1.30m . [Pis 3 and 4] Below layer 65- 1.10-1.30m chalk layer (58); 1.30-1.52m or 1.90m dark brown silty clay with chalk inclusions (59); At northern end of trench 1.52m-1.92m+ chalk layer (60). At southern end of trench below 59 1.90m+ dark brown silty clay with chalk inclusions (61). Well (2) Pit (3)

APPENDIX 2: Feature details

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Cut</i>	<i>Fill (s)</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Dating evidence</i>
1		50	Layer	Late Post-medieval	Stratigraphy
1		51	Layer	Late Post-medieval?	Stratigraphy
1		52	Layer	Post-medieval	Clay Pipe
1		53	Layer	Medieval	Pottery
1		54	Layer	Medieval	Pottery
1		55	Layer	Medieval or earlier?	Stratigraphy and Pottery
1	1	56	Linear?	Medieval	Pottery
1		57	Layer	Medieval or earlier?	Stratigraphy
2		58	Layer	Late Post-medieval	Stratigraphy
2		59	Layer	Later Post-medieval (18 th century)	Pottery
2		60	Layer	Post-medieval or earlier	Stratigraphy
2		61	Layer	Post-medieval or earlier	Stratigraphy
2	2	62, 63	Well	Post-medieval or earlier	Stratigraphy
2	3	64	Pit	Late Post-medieval/early modern	Clay pipe and Stratigraphy
2		65	Layer	Late Post-medieval/early Modern	Stratigraphy

APPENDIX 3: Pottery occurrence by number and weight (in g) of sherds per context by fabric type

<i>Deposit</i>	<i>R17</i>		<i>R33</i>		<i>R43</i>		<i>R68</i>		<i>R71</i>		<i>R73</i>		<i>EM35</i>		<i>M7</i>		<i>PM26</i>	
	<i>No</i>	<i>Wt</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Wt</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Wt</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Wt</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Wt</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Wt</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Wt</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Wt</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Wt</i>
51											1	2						
53							1	27			1	23			1	4		
54	2	34	1	4	1	1	3	65	1	6	27	222	3	37				
55							1	33										
56															1	145		
59																	1	8
Total	2	34	1	4	1	1	5	125	1	6	29	247	3	37	2	149	1	8

APPENDIX 4: Inventory of animal bone

<i>Deposit</i>	<i>No. frags</i>	<i>Wt (g)</i>	<i>Large</i>	<i>Medium</i>	<i>Small</i>	<i>Unidentified</i>
54	12	188	-	9	1	2
55	3	60	2	-	-	1
Total / MNI	15	248	1 cow	1 sheep/goat	1 cat(?)	-

APPENDIX 5: Catalogue of brick and tile.

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Cut</i>	<i>Deposit</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Wt (g)</i>
1		53	Layer (medieval)	1	467
1		54	Layer (medieval)	6	248

Kent County Council SMR summary form

Site Name: 28 Spital Street, Dartford, Kent

Site address: 28 Spital Street, Dartford, Kent

Summary: The evaluation has revealed that a complex sequence of post-medieval and medieval deposits. A linear feature is dated to the medieval period and a pit and backfilled well are of post-medieval date. There is a hint of Roman activity in form of deposits in the base of trench 1 and the recovery of a small assemblage of Roman residual pottery found in later deposits within this trench.

District/Unitary: Dartford

Parish: Dartford

Periods: Roman, Medieval, Post-medieval

NGR: TQ 5405 7406

Type of archaeological work: Evaluation

Date of Recording: 5th August 2014

Unit undertaking recording: Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Geology: Gravel

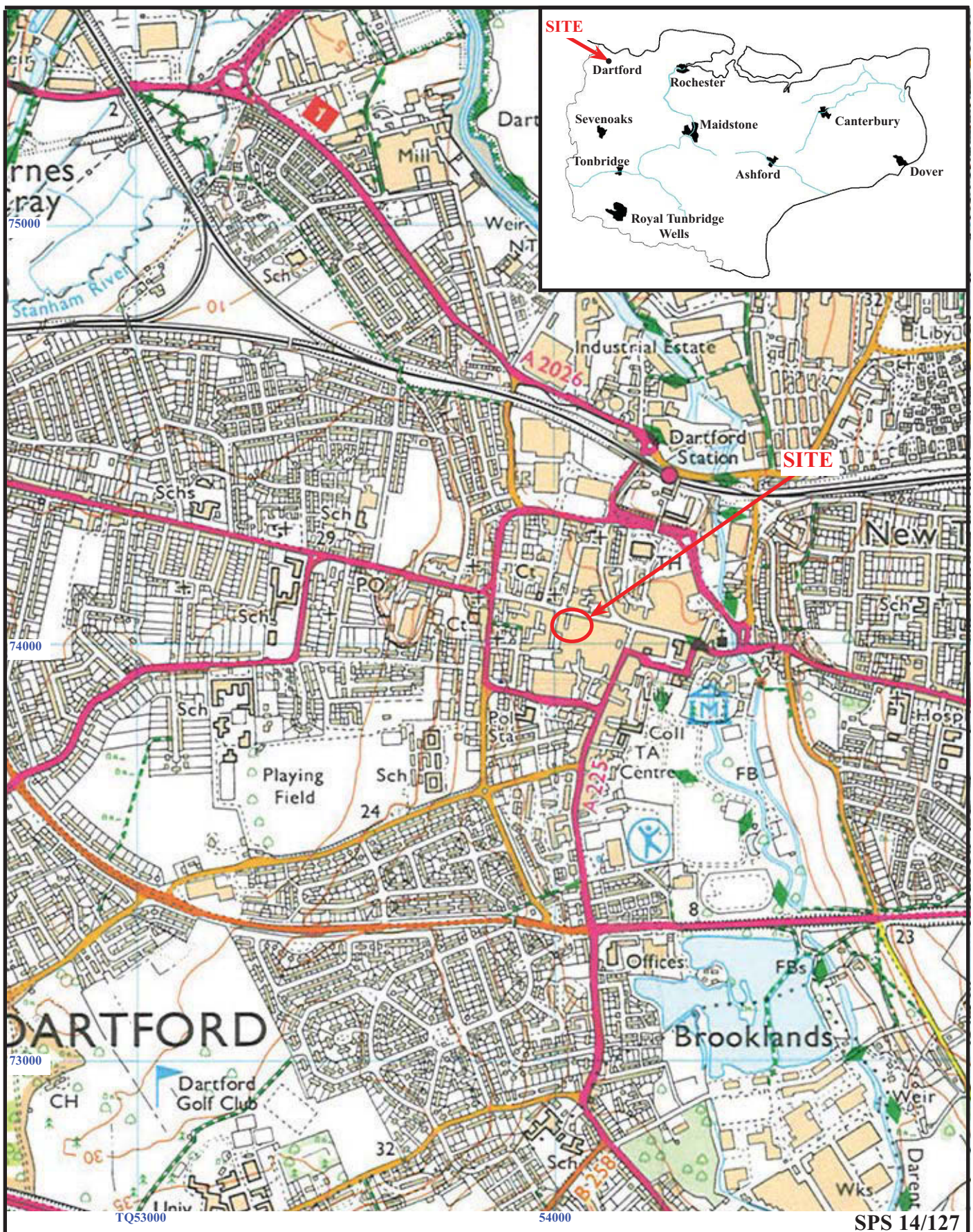
Title and author of report: 28 Spital Street, Dartford, Kent, an archaeological evaluation by Daniel Bray and Joanna Pine

Summary of results by period: The evaluation has revealed that a complex sequence of post-medieval and medieval deposits. A linear feature is dated to the medieval period and a pit and backfilled well are of post-medieval date. There is a hint of Roman activity in form of deposits in the base of trench 1 and the recovery of a small assemblage of Roman residual pottery found in later deposits within this trench.

Location of archive and finds: The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, 47–49 De Beauvoir Road, Reading RG1 5NR and will be deposited at a museum willing to accept the archive in due course.

Contact at Unit: Steve Ford

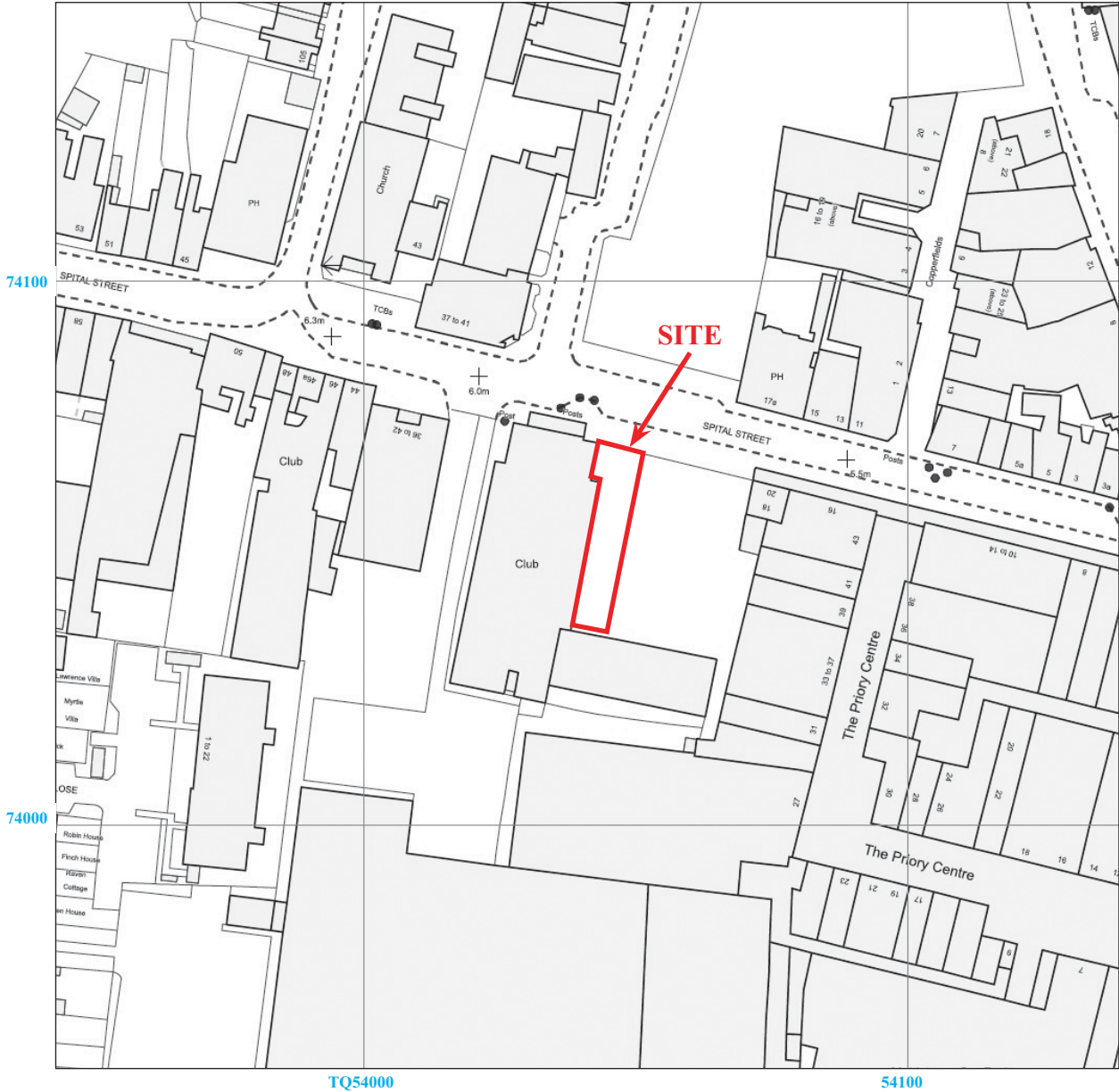
Date: 19th September 2014



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Figure 1. Location of site within Dartford and Kent.

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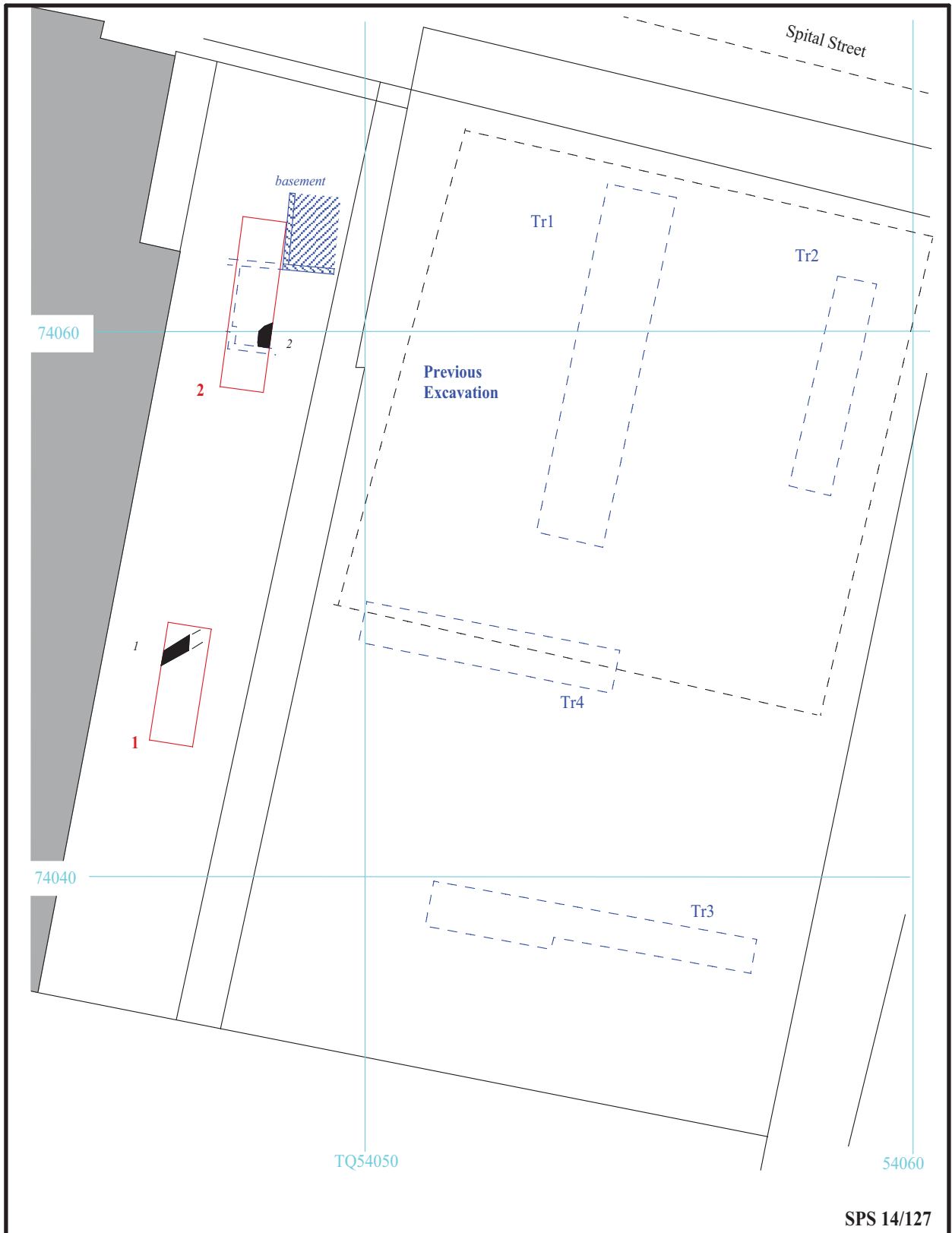


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Figure 2. Detailed location of site off Spital Street.

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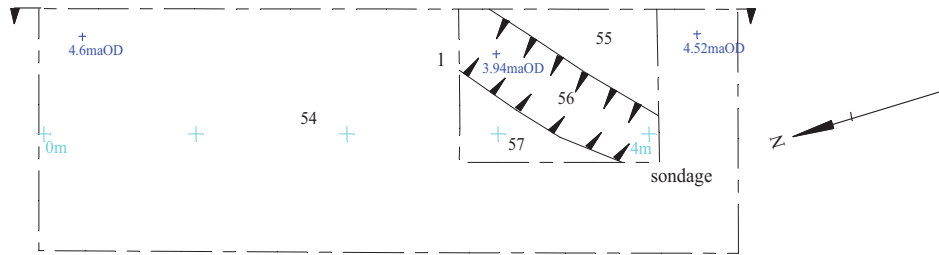
**28 Spital Street, Dartford, Kent, 2014
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Figure 3. Location of trenches an relative to previous excavation areas to the east.

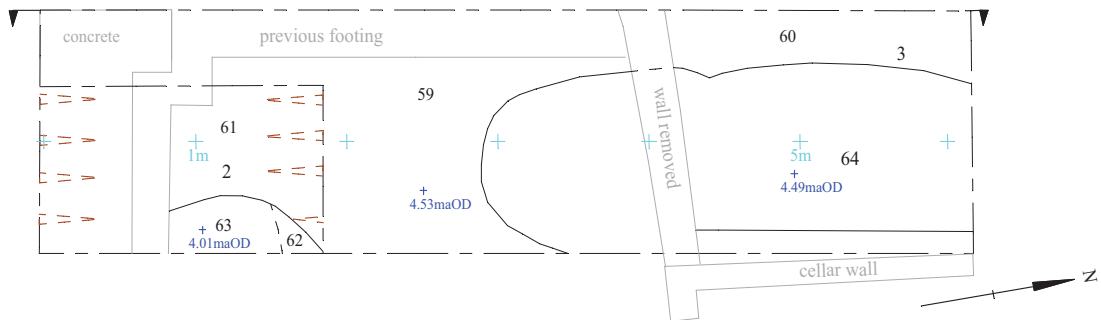


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Trench 1 - base of trench



Trench 2 -base of trench



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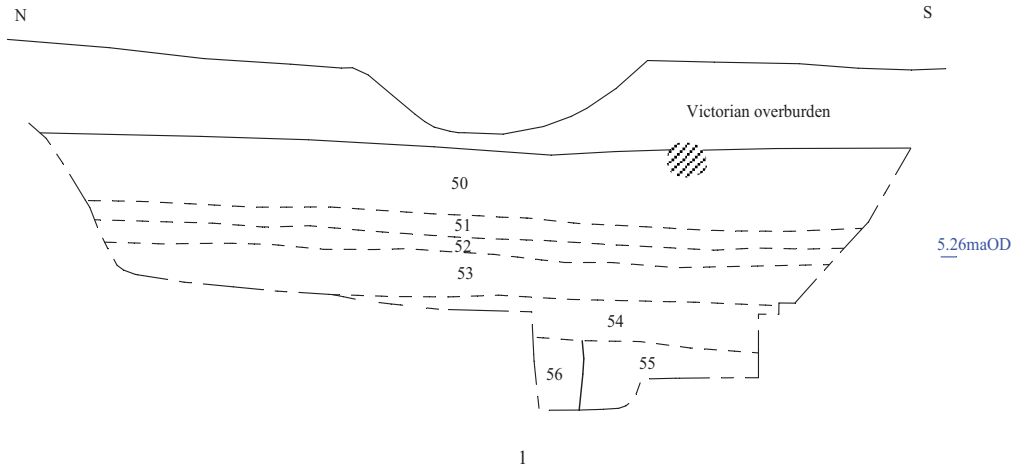
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Figure 4. Detail of trenches.



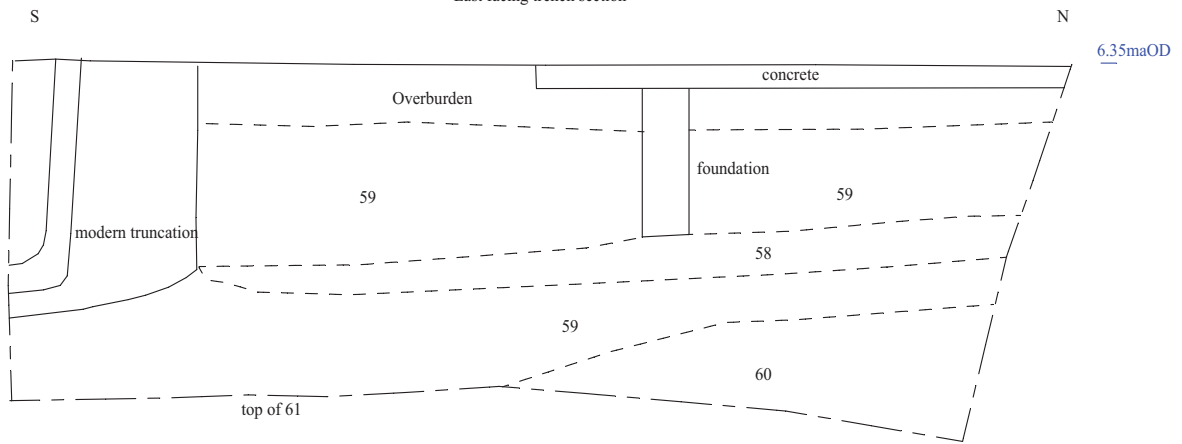
Trench 1

West facing trench section



Trench 2

East facing trench section



top of 61

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Figure 5. Trench sections.



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Plate 1. Trench 1, looking north, Scales: horizontal 2m and 1m, vertical 1m.



Plate 2. Trench 1, sondage with cut 1, looking east, Scales: horizontal 1m, vertical 2m.

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Plates 1 - 2.

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Plate 3. Trench 2, looking north-east, Scales: horizontal 2m, vertical 1m.



Plate 4. Trench 2 section, looking east, Scales: horizontal 1m, vertical 2m.

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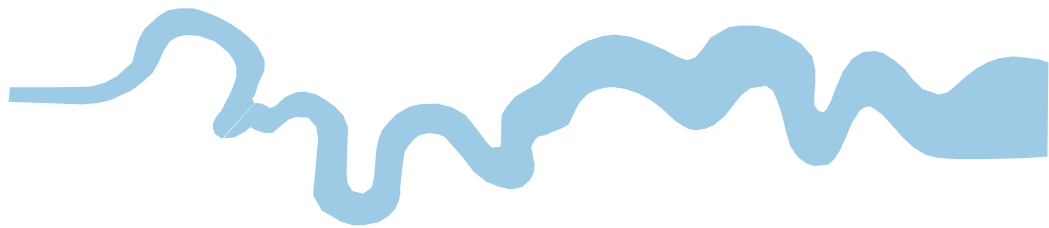
Plates 3 - 4.

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TIME CHART

	Calendar Years
Modern _____	AD 1901
Victorian _____	AD 1837
Post Medieval _____	AD 1500
Medieval _____	AD 1066
Saxon _____	AD 410
Roman _____	AD 43
Iron Age _____	BC/AD 750 BC
Bronze Age: Late -----	1300 BC
Bronze Age: Middle -----	1700 BC
Bronze Age: Early -----	2100 BC
Neolithic: Late	3300 BC
Neolithic: Early	4300 BC
Mesolithic: Late	6000 BC
Mesolithic: Early	10000 BC
Palaeolithic: Upper	30000 BC
Palaeolithic: Middle	70000 BC
Palaeolithic: Lower	2,000,000 BC





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